



global witness

Cameroon

Project of Independent Observation in Support of
Forest Law Enforcement in Cameroon

**Approved by the Ministry of
the Environment and Forests**

Report No. 021 En

Joint mission: Central Control Unit – Independent Observer

Title: TRSA No. 1230

Location: NKOUEEN (East Province)

Mission date: July 22 - 28, 2002

Company: GRUMEX

Independent Observer (Global Witness):

Mr. Albert K. Barume, Deputy Director

Mr. Serge C. Moukouri, Technical Assistant

Mr. Tangye C Celestine, Driver

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
2. RESOURCES USED	1
3. COMPOSITION OF THE MISSION	1
4. CONSTRAINTS	1
5. RESULTS OF THE MISSION	2
5.1. Summary of the case	2
5.2. Observations of the Independent Observer	2
6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION	4
7. ANNEXE	5

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Central Control¹ Unit (CCU) undertook a control mission to the Department of Lom et Djerem (East Province) from July 22 to 28 2002 accompanied by the Independent Observer. The aim of this mission was to verify allegations that GRUMEX had continued its timber removal operations beyond the authorised period. The mission was unable to accomplish its task as the main entry point to the work site was blocked by people from the village of Nkouen, who claimed they had suffered damage due to the activities of GRUMEX.

In view of the above, **the Independent Observer recommends:**

The sending of a further control mission with the specific responsibility of verifying:

1. The allegations made by the people from the village of Nkouen regarding previous logging in this forest, along with the timber evacuation operations carried out by GRUMEX;
2. Whether GRUMEX continued its evacuation activities beyond the authorised period.

2. RESOURCES USED

- 1 4x4 pick-up truck
- 1 tape recorder
- 2 Garmin GPS
- 1 video camera
- 1 laptop computer

3. COMPOSITION OF THE MISSION

The mission was made up of one CCU official, the Head of the east control Provincial Brigade (PB) and two members of the Independent Observer technical team.

4. CONSTRAINTS

The mission was not able to access the GRUMEX logging operation as the main entry point to the work site was blocked by someone from the local population, whose crops had been destroyed by the loggers.

¹ “Control” in the context of this report means “Law Enforcement” or to “check compliance with law”.

5. RESULTS OF THE MISSION

5.1. Summary of the case

GRUMEX is holder of a Timber Recovery Special Authorisation (TRSA). It was allocated this title by means of Minister of the Environment and Forest's certificate No. 1230/ASEB/MINEF/CAB/UCC dated the 1st February, 2002 (see Appendix). This title indicates that GRUMEX is authorised to remove a volume of 2,500.611m³ of wood felled and abandoned at Nkouen. These operations should have ended on the 4th April, 2002. But several sources allege that they were continued beyond the authorised period.

Moreover, the people of Nkouen claim their crops were destroyed by GRUMEX due to the opening up of the access route to TRSA No. 1230. They also state that a stock of felled wood is abandoned in the forest. Similarly, they state that the previous logging was not in line with the clauses of its contractual obligations towards the villagers.

5.2. Observations of the Independent Observer

Two logging roads provide access to the GRUMEX work site. The entry to the first track is located at approximately 700 m. to the south of point A (see map below), along the Bertoua/AbongBang road. This entry point was closed by GRUMEX due to its impassability. Point A (33N 334334 UTM 476803) forms the entry point of the second track that was opened up by the company to reach the work site (see map below). But this track was blocked by a member of the Nkouen community, whose crops had been destroyed by the logging company (see photo below). This person refused to let anyone pass until he had been compensated. The people of the village of Nkouen allege that the previous loggers of this forest did not respect the clauses of the contractual obligations towards villagers to which they had freely agreed. In addition, these people state that a stock of wood has been abandoned in this forest.

Map: Entry to the logging road blocked by local people

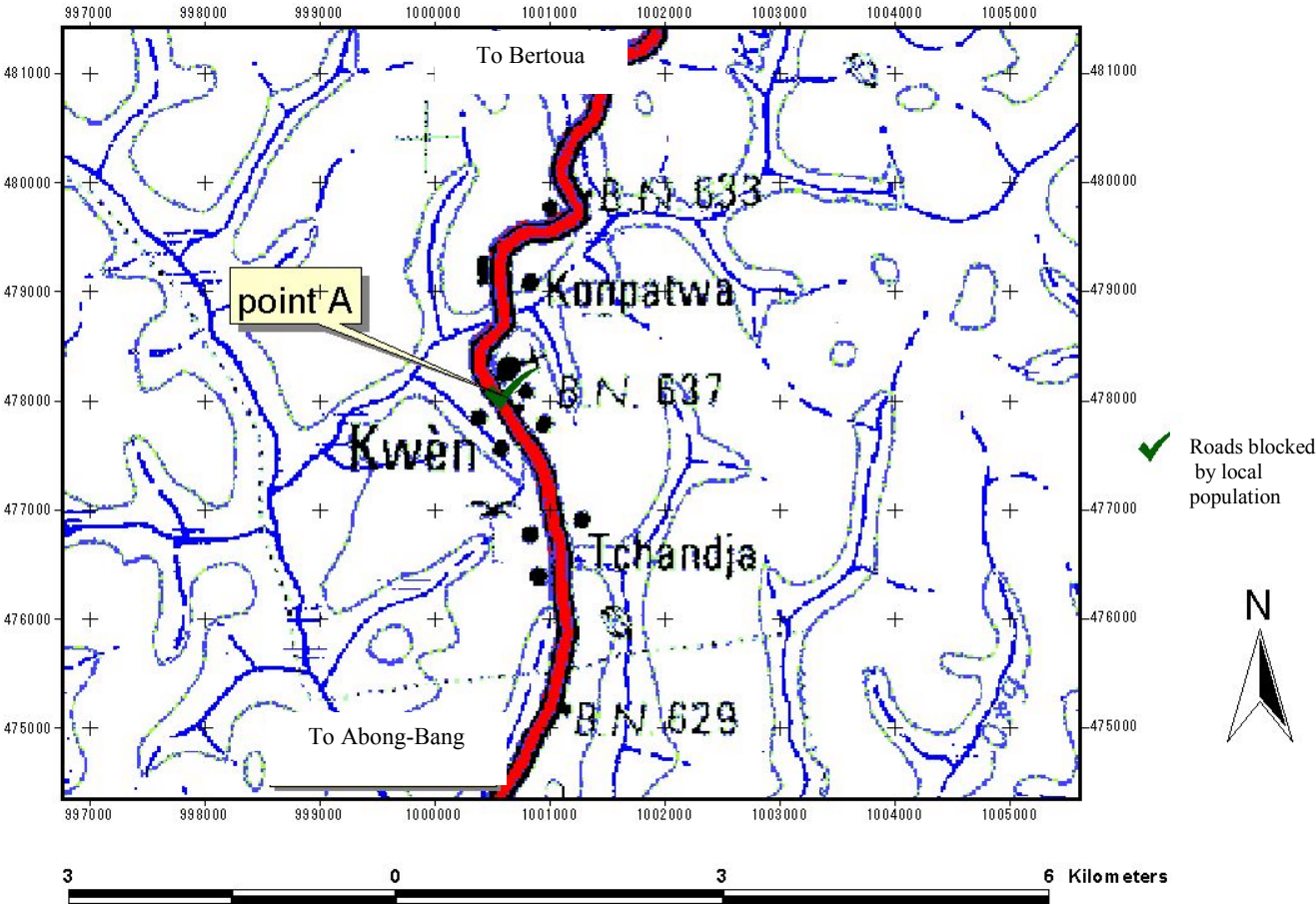


Photo: Main access road to the Grumex work site

However, at the request of the Independent Observer, the people in question decided that they would agree to unblock the access route to Grumex if another control mission, with sufficient time to evaluate the damage suffered by some of them, were to return.

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

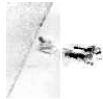
The case between some members of the village of Nkouen and Grumex will only be resolved once the facts about the logging site have been verified.

Consequently, **the Independent Observer recommends:**

The sending of a further control mission with the specific responsibility of verifying:

- The allegations made by the people from the village of Nkouen regarding previous logging in this forest, along with the timber evacuation operations carried out by GRUMEX;
- Whether GRUMEX continued its evacuation activities beyond the authorised period.

7. ANNEXE



AMPLIATION

REPUBLIQUE DU CAMEROUN
Paix - Travail - Patrie

MINISTRE DE L'ENVIRONNEMENT
ET DES FORESTS

CABINET DU MINISTRE

UNITE CENTRALE DE CONTROLE

REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON
Peace-Work-Fatherland

MINISTRY OF THE ENVIRONMENT
AND FORESTRY

MINISTER'S CABINET

CENTRAL UNIT OF CONTROL

Yaoundé le: 01 FEV. 2002

N° 1230/ASEU/MINEF/CAB/UCC.-

AUTORISATION SPECIALE D'ENLEVEMENT DES BOIS RELATIVE A L'AVIS AU PUBLIC N°1086 DU 26 DECEMBRE 2001

Le Ministre de l'Environnement et des Forêts,

Autorise la Société GRUMEX, à procéder à l'enlèvement des bois abattus et abandonnés au lieu dit NKOUEEN, Arrondissement de DIMAKO, Département du HAUT-NYONG, Province de l'EST d'un volume de 2500,611 m³ de bois (toutes essences confondues), objet de l'avis au public N°1086/AP/MINEF/CAB/UCC du 26 Décembre 2001 dont l'intéressée a été adjudicataire

Le transport des grumes issues de l'opération susvisée qui s'étendra jusqu'au 04 avril 2002, est conditionné par la présentation des lettres de voiture spéciales dûment visées de l'Unité Centrale de Contrôle.

Le suivi des activités sus-évoquées sera sous la supervision de la Délégation Provinciale lettres de voiture

La Délégation Départementale sera tenue de vérifier la conformité du cubage et le Poste Forestier et Chassés se chargera de la numérotation des grumes ainsi que du visa des dites lettres de voiture au départ du chantier

Toute irrégularité ou nouvel abattage entrainera l'annulation immédiate de ladite autorisation sans préjudice des dommages et intérêts sur les bois frauduleusement exploités

En foi de quoi, la présente autorisation est établie et délivrée à l'intéressée pour servir et valoir ce que de droit /-

AMPLIATIONS :

- DPEF/BRC/EST
- DDEF/HAUT-NYONG
- PFC/DIMAKO
- INTERESSEE

